

may, for example, be a graphical user interface displayed on an iPod® manufactured by Apple Computer of Cupertino, Calif., and **FIG. 35A** may for example be a graphical user interface associated with a music management program, such as iTunes® manufactured by Apple Computer of Cupertino, Calif.

[0161] Following block **902**, the user interface method **900** proceeds to block **904** where a touch is detected over the displayed list of songs (or window or entire GUI). This may be accomplished with the touch sensitive input device when an object such as a stylus or one or more fingers is placed on the touch sensitive surface of the touch sensitive input device such as a touch screen. **FIGS. 34B and 35B** show a finger **925** placed over the window **930** including the list of songs **932**.

[0162] Once a touch is detected, the user interface method **900** proceeds to block **906** where a virtual scroll wheel is activated. That is, a virtual scroll wheel is displayed in addition to the list of songs and its functionality is enabled. In essence, because the song list was touched, a scroll wheel that allows a user to traverse through the songs in the list of songs is provided. In some cases, the virtual scroll wheel displaces the media items, i.e., the media items are minimized or shifted to make room for the virtual scroll wheel. In other cases, the virtual scroll wheel is positioned or laid over the media items (the media items keep their current size, shape and position). The virtual scroll wheel can be made semi-transparent so that the media items can be viewed through the virtual scroll wheel. **FIGS. 34C and 35C** show a transparent virtual scroll **936** wheel laid over the window **930** including the list of songs **932**. Alternatively, a virtual slider bar may be displayed.

[0163] Once displayed, a determination **908** is made as to whether or not a scrolling touch event (or gesture) is performed relative to the virtual scroll wheel. For example, whether or not a finger is positioned over the scroll wheel and whether or not the finger is moved around the scroll wheel in a swirling fashion.

[0164] If a scrolling touch event is performed by the user, the user interface method **900** proceeds to block **910** where scrolling is implemented through the list of songs in accordance with the scrolling touch event. By way of example, a selector bar may be moved from one song to another as the finger is swirled around the virtual scroll wheel. **FIGS. 34D and 35D** show the finger **925** swirling around the virtual scroll wheel **936**, and a selector bar **938** moving linearly through the list of songs **932** in accordance with the swirling finger **925**. In the illustrated embodiments, the selector bar is moved linearly up when the finger is swirled in a clockwise fashion and linearly down when the finger is swirled in a counterclockwise fashion. It should be noted, however, that this is not a limitation. For example, the selector bar may moved linearly down when the finger is swirled in a clockwise fashion and linearly up when the finger is swirled in a counterclockwise fashion.

[0165] If a scrolling or select touch event is not performed, the user interface method **900** proceeds to block **916** where the virtual scroll wheel is deactivated. That is, the virtual scroll wheel is disabled and removed from the display. **FIGS. 34E and 35E** show the display **928** without the virtual scroll wheel **936**. Although the virtual scroll wheel **936** is removed, changes made to the list of songs, i.e., the position of the selector bar **938**, typically remain.

[0166] In some cases, the virtual scroll wheel may include button zones across its surface or a virtual button at its center or around its sides. The buttons and button zones may for example correspond to menu, play, seek, pause, and/or the like. In this particular embodiment, the method described above may include additional steps that occur before block **416**. For example, if a scrolling touch event is not performed, the user interface method **900** may include an additional block where a determination is made as to whether or not a selection touch event (or gesture) is performed relative to the virtual scroll wheel. The selection touch event may be implemented by tapping the button or by exerting increased or decreased pressure on the button rather than swirling around the surface of the virtual scroll wheel (see **FIGS. 34F and 35F**). If the button is a song select or enter button, the method include another block where the song with the selector bar disposed thereover is selected. That is, when the virtual button is tapped, or otherwise selected, the song currently covered by the selector bar is played and outputted for the user's enjoyment.

[0167] It should be noted that the methods described above are not limited to scrolling through a list of songs. Any media item as well as any group of elements can be scrolled through using the aforementioned technique. For example, in photo layout **942** as shown in **FIGS. 36A-36C**, the virtual scroll wheel **936** may appear when the user places their finger **925** over the photo layout **942** (or grouping), and thereafter it can be used to move a highlighter **944** through the various photos **943** in the layout **942**. By way of example, the photos may be thumbnails images that make traversing through a large number of images easier.

[0168] **FIG. 37** is a method **950**, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The method begins at block **952** where it is determined if a touch is detected. If a touch is detected, the method proceeds to block **954** where the current operating conditions are monitored and analyzed. The conditions may for example correspond to the current application, the state of the application and/or the touch characteristics associated with the touch.

[0169] If a first set of conditions are implemented, the method proceeds to block **956** where a first GUI element is activated. For example, as shown in **FIGS. 38A-B**, in an active window **960** of a music management program, a scroll wheel **962** may be activated when a user touches a playlist portion **964** of the active window **960**.

[0170] If a second set of conditions are implemented, the method proceeds to block **958** where a second GUI element is activated. For example, as shown in **FIGS. 38B-C**, in the active window **960** of a music management program, a music control panel **966** may be activated when a user also touches a border **968** of the active window **960**. Although they work independent of one another, the first and second GUI elements may be activated at the same time if the first and second conditions occur simultaneously (**FIG. 34C**).

[0171] Following block **956**, the method proceeds to block **960** where it is determined if the first GUI element should be deactivated. If so, the method proceeds to block **962** where the GUI element is deactivated. For example, as shown in **FIG. 38D**, the first GUI element (scroll wheel **962**) is disabled and removed from display when the finger **925** is no longer detected over the playlist **962**. If not, the method maintains block **956**.